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THE SIXTH EUROPEAN MEETING OF THE WHO COLLABORATING CENTRES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Minutes of the session of the Group on Maritime Health: WHO Maritime Health Collaborating Centres discuss activities in line with the Global Plan of Action, 2009-2012 (GPA) Session held in Madrid on 15 October 2008

Current and future collaboration on special topics:

Group 5: Maritime Health (* participants only in this meeting)

List of participants:

Per Sabro Nielsen (Esbjerg)
Bogdan Jaremin (Gdynia)
Alf Magne Horneland (Bergen)
Fabienne Knudsen (Esbjerg)
Maria Jeżewska (Gdynia)
Andy Smith (Cardiff)
Marcus Oldenburg (Hamburg)
Xaver Baur (Hamburg)
* Lygia T. Budnik (Hamburg)
* Trygve Eklund

- 1 The participants of this group strongly suggested that the Norwegian Centre for Maritime Medicine at the Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, and the Centre for Occupational Health Psychology, Cardiff, should become WHO CCs for the Health of Seafarers. Further, centres (institutes) in countries from continents other than Europe should be included.
- 2 A new project should be: “Stress and fatigue in seafaring and other maritime industries”. This should include investigations of physical stressors (noise, vibration, high temperature, electrical fields) and psychosocial stressors (long working hours,

separation from the family). Additional topics should be: *Visual capacity testing of watch-keeping officers* and *Protection and promoting health in the workplace*.

Prof. Jaremin and Dr Jeżewska expressed their interest in the participation in the new project, as the team from the Interfaculty Institute of Maritime and Tropical Medicine, Medical University of Gdansk. For a long time, they have been involved in studies in this field with special attention focused on the role of promotion of health at sea.

The WHO CC in Hamburg will prepare a first draft of the new project and will initially function as a leading CC. All the WHO CCs on the health of seafarers as well as the Cardiff Centre will take part in the implementation of this project. WHO GPA 2009-2012: Objective 2. Actions 11 – 13.

- 3 “Prevention and Management of occupational asthma”
An ongoing project of the WHO CC in Hamburg. New proposal: The Bergen Centre will join the group. Supported by a grant of the ERS An EU guideline will be prepared and published in 2009 WHO GPA 2009-2012 Objective 2. Action 11.
- 4 “Health and safety in maritime area, land transporting, and fishing/maritime register of deaths and accidents”.
An ongoing project of the WHO CC in Esbjerg New proposal: Additional aspects and new title:
“Human loss in seafaring industry – global register of causalities as an effective tool”
Contributions from the WHO CC in Gdynia, and the Bergen Centre.
Prof. Jaremin proposed to launch the project on the reduction of risk of casualties, to be implemented in collaboration with the Centre in Esbjerg, Denmark, and the Centre in Cardiff, UK. It was agreed that Dr Per Sabro Nielsen will be a coordinator of this project.
Objective 2. Action 11, or objective 4. Action 20.
- 5 “Establishment of an international working group for the utilisation of telemedicine to reduce health risks of seafarers”
An ongoing project of the WHO CC in Hamburg.
New proposal: the participants will significantly broaden this project including the networking concept of the Bergen Centre and the improvement of radiomedical communication.
Dr Alf Magne will prepare a draft proposal of these new aspects.
- 6 International Medical Guide for Ships (IMGS): All participants agreed that the 3rd edition of the Guide has several shortcomings; among others: inconsistencies in the text and the list of medicines/equipment, missing quantities of some medicines, figures, flow charts. Further, it is more like a teaching book and not like a practical guide to be used by seafarers in emergency cases during ship voyages.

An annex to the IMGS will be developed which will include a list of medicines and medical equipment, as well as minimum quantities of all medicines listed. In the coming Before long, the WHO CC in Hamburg will distribute a draft of such an annex. It should be discussed and in future could be the basis for writing the final annex which is intended to be published jointly by the Bergen Centre and the Centre in Gdynia. WHO will be informed and advised how the fourth edition of the IMGS could be improved in future, with the involvement of the WHO Collaborating Centres on Maritime Occupational Health. Dr Alf Magne will formulate a short statement/proposal covering possible ways for improvement.

- 7 Lygia Budnik reported on a new topic, namely *Health risks due to fumigants and other toxic chemicals in containers*.
For a respective WHO GPA project cooperation should be initiated. Possible candidates could be Prof. Bente Moen (Bergen), and the Norwegian, Danish and Polish Port Authorities. Alf Magne Horneland, Per Sabro Nielsen and Bogdan Jaremin will establish contacts.

8. Priorities

- 1 New project:
“Stress and fatigue in seafaring and other maritime industries”
- 2 Broadening the ongoing project of the WHO CC in Esbjerg:
“Human loss in seafaring industry – global registers of causalities as an effective tool”
- 3 Possible new project:
“Health risks due to fumigants and other toxic chemicals in containers”

(Contributed by M.Jezewska)